

*Just thought
you might be
interested in this
m.t.*

Paul Scott
**OSWALD'S
LAST LETTER**

■ SEVEN YEARS after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, a number of intriguing mysteries still hang over the activities of Lee Harvey Oswald, the suspected assassin who met the same fate. Probably the most baffling of these mysteries, and one still being quietly probed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, is the last letter Oswald is believed to have written before President Kennedy was gunned down in Dallas.

Of the still secret files of the Warren Commission's investigation of the assassination (there are more than 25,000 pages still sealed in the National Archives), an estimated half-dozen documents contain information about Oswald's last formal communication — a letter sent to the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D.C. Although a copy of the letter and certain information pertaining to its significance was published by the Warren Commission in 1964, many mysteries still surround its meaning and purpose.

Intercepted and read by the F.B.I.

December 16, 1970

before it ever arrived at its destination, the Oswald letter bears an Irving, Texas, postmark which appears to carry the date of November 12, 1963 — or ten days before the assassination. I say "appears" because examination of the postmark on the envelope (now a Warren Commission exhibit in the National Archives) shows that the date is far from clear. Although there is space for another figure before the *Two* in the postmark, none appears. The postmark reads:

Irving
Nov 2
5-PM
1963
Tex

The Warren Commission based its findings that the Oswald letter was apparently mailed on November 12, 1963, on evidence and testimony gathered from several sources. The original of this Oswald letter, obtained later from the Soviet Embassy, was dated inside as having been written on November 9, 1963. An F.B.I. report

indicated the letter was mailed about November twelfth, and the testimony of Mrs. Ruth Paine, which will be discussed later, supported this mailing date. The date of the postmark is considered highly significant since one marked earlier than November 9, 1963, would tend to support an unconfirmed theory that the Oswald letter was a plant and not actually typed by him.

The Warren Commission concluded in its final report that the Oswald letter was an attempt to ingratiate himself with Soviet Embassy officials in order to obtain visas to the Soviet Union for himself and his family. The letter was, of course, addressed to the Consular division. But it was directed to a "Tovarich Reznkecnyen, N." one of the top members of the Soviet Secret Police (K.G.B.) in the United States. The mysterious letter (with misspellings) reads as follows:

Dear sirs;

This is to inform you of recent events since my meetings with comrade Kostin in the Embassy Of the Soviet Union, Mexico City, Mexico.

I was unable to remain in Mexico indefinitely because of my mexican visa restrictions which was for 15 days only. I could not take a chance on requesting a new visa unless I used my real name, so I returned to the United States.

I had not planned to contact the Soviet embassy in Mexico so they were unprepared, had I

been able to reach the Soviet Embassy in Havana as planned, the embassy there would have had time to complete our business.

Of course the Soviet embassy was not at fault, they were, as I say unprepared, the Cuban consulate was guilty of a gross breach of regulations, I am glad he has since been replied.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is not now interested in my activities in the progressive organization "Fair Play for Cuba Committee," of which I was secretary in New Orleans (state Louisiana) since I no longer reside in that state. However, the F.B.I. has visited us here in Dallas, Texas, on November 1st. Agent James P. Hasty warned me that if I engaged in F.P.C.C. activities in Texas the F.B.I. will again take an "interest" in me.

This agent also "suggested" to Marine Nichilayeva that she could remain in the United States under F.B.I. "protection," that is, she could defect from the Soviet Union, of course, I and my wife strongly protested these tactics by the notorious F.B.I.

Please inform us of the arrival of our Soviet entrance visa's as soon as they come.

Also, this is to inform you of the birth on October 20, 1963 of a DAUGHTER, AUDREY

MARINA OSWALD in DALLAS, TEXAS, to my wife.

Respectfully,
Lee H. Oswald

One mysterious paragraph of this letter that the F.B.I. is still trying to unravel is the reference Oswald made to the unannounced replacement of an official in the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City. What baffles the F.B.I. is how Oswald could have learned about the recall of the Cuban official, a fact revealed by their investigation to have been a tightly guarded secret at the time.

In an investigation requested by the Warren Commission, the Central Intelligence Agency identified the above Cuban official as Señor Eusebio Azque of the Cuban Embassy, whom Oswald had contacted during his Mexican trip. He was replaced after Oswald's visit and shortly before Kennedy was assassinated. The C.I.A. report to the Commission stated:

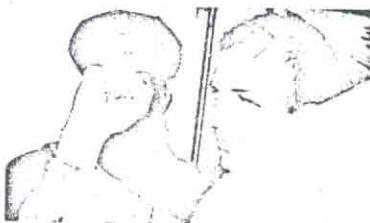
We surmise that the references in Oswald's 9 November letter to a man who had since been replaced must refer to Cuban Eusebio Azque, who left Mexico for Cuba on permanent transfer on 18 November, 1963, four days before the assassination.

Azque had been in Mexico for 18 years and it was known as early as September 1963 that Azque was to be replaced. His replacement did arrive in September. Azque was scheduled to leave in October but did not leave until 18 November.

December 16, 1970

We do not know who might have told Oswald that Azque or any other Cuban had been or was to be replaced, but we speculate that Silvia Duran or some Soviet official might have mentioned it if Oswald complained about Azque's altercation with him.

The F.B.I. has never fully accepted this C.I.A. conclusion. The Bureau's own investigation in Mexico City indi-



Assassin Lee Oswald gives Communist salute.

cated that it was "highly unlikely" that Oswald could have learned of Azque's recall during his visit to Mexico.

The F.B.I. discounts the C.I.A. suggestion to the Warren Commission that Silvia Duran, a pro-Castro Mexican employee of the Cuban Embassy, might have told Oswald about Azque being removed. In her statement to Mexican officials concerning her discussion with Oswald, Mrs. Duran made no mention of Azque. And, although she was questioned at the request of C.I.A., no attempt was made to quiz her about whether she knew of Azque's recall. This makes the C.I.A. conclusion highly dubious, to say the least.

One statement that Mrs. Duran did make to Mexican officials questioning her in this matter was that Oswald showed her a Communist Party membership card which he said was his own. Unanswered are the questions of whether it was a genuine card or forged, and where Oswald might have obtained it. But, for reasons undisclosed by the Warren Commission, much of Mrs. Duran's information about Oswald and his Mexico trip was ordered sealed following issuance of the report naming Oswald as the lone assassin.

Although the F.B.I. still has not been able to resolve the key mystery of the Oswald letter, it has narrowed the sources of where he might have obtained information about Azque. These sources are:

(1.) *An informant in the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City who contacted Oswald after he returned to the U.S. (2.) The Central Intelligence Agency. Or (3.) the Soviet Secret Police (K.G.B.) in Mexico City.*

Significantly, the F.B.I. probe discovered that the K.G.B. and the C.I.A. learned of Azque's replacement at approximately the same time, and not until *after* Oswald visited Mexico City. This finding has raised the possibility that whoever informed Oswald contacted him after he returned to Dallas from Mexico City. A suspect is a Japanese girl whom Oswald reportedly met several times in Dallas after returning from Mexico City. The girl was reported seen at the hotel

where Oswald stayed while in Mexico City, and the report of the C.I.A. listing guests at the hotel is still classified as secret.

One of the most intriguing things about the Oswald letter was the number of persons that secretly read it before the letter reached the Soviet Embassy:

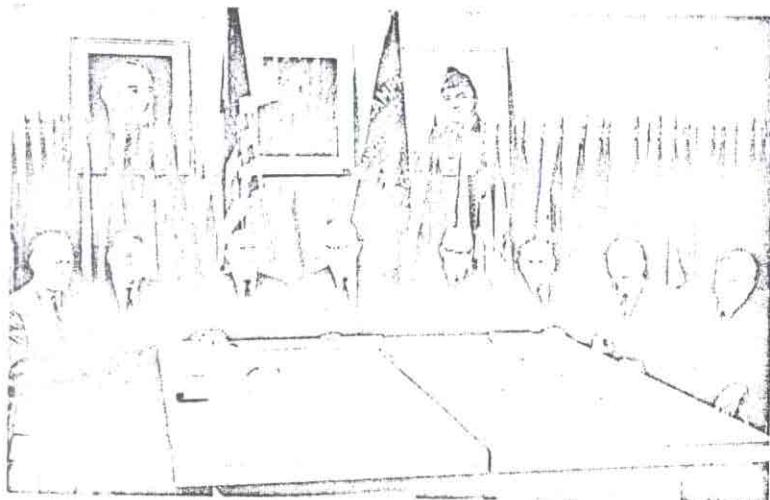
(1.) Mrs. Ruth Paine told the Warren Commission that Oswald spent the weekend of November 9, 1963, at her home working on the letter. She testified that one preliminary draft of the letter was observed by her without Oswald's knowledge. A piece of paper which was identified as one of these drafts was found among Oswald's effects by Mrs. Paine and turned over to the F.B.I. on November 23, 1963, one day after the assassination.

(2.) Marina Oswald told the Warren Commission that her husband retyped the letter's envelope at least ten times, but she was unable "to add anything to an understanding of its content."

(3.) The F.B.I. became interested in the Oswald letter shortly after it was mailed and before Kennedy was assassinated. One unclassified F.B.I. report states that the Agency's headquarters in Washington was notified of Oswald's contact with the Soviet Embassy on November 18, 1963. Ironically, this information was passed along to the Dallas F.B.I. office on November twenty-second — the day of the assassination — but too late to be acted on before the President was gunned down.

The reference to "Comrade Kostin"

The Review Of The NEWS



Having named Oswald as lone assassin, Warren Commission hides unreleased secret testimony.

in the letter attracted the F.B.I.'s attention. He was identified as Valeriy Vladimirovich Kostikov, a member of the Consular staff of the Soviet Union in Mexico City, and at the time the chief K.G.B. officer stationed in the Western Hemisphere. The F.B.I. and C.I.A. documents covering the importance attached to Oswald's meeting with Kostikov are still secret and under lock and key in the National Archives. Whether their unpublished content will be made public before the end of the year depends on a review now under way by officials of the National Archives. This review of still secret Warren Commission papers involves a total of 165 F.B.I. reports, 50 C.I.A. documents, 13 State Department memoranda and cables, 11 Secret Service

reports, and several hundred pages of transcript from the executive hearings of the Warren Commission.

By estimate of National Archives officials, approximately eighty percent of the Warren Commission files and records were published by the Commission in 1964, or were released after the Archives' first review in 1965. While it is not known yet which of the remaining secret Commission files will be open early next year, Archives officials believe nearly all of them will be published within the next five years. As one Archives official put it: "We will know within a month the documents we can make available at this time. The final determination as to what is open and closed is up to the Agency of origin. Nearly all their

reports are now in. My estimate is that there would be very little still closed after 1975. Some key documents will be released this year."

A partial list of the most important documents under review, covering Oswald's activities in Mexico and his relations with the K.G.B. and C.I.A., include the following:

(1.) *A C.I.A. report on Lee Harvey Oswald's activities in Mexico, dated October 10, 1963, six weeks before the assassination.*

(2.) *A memorandum to F.B.I. Director J. Edgar Hoover from Richard Helms (then) Deputy C.I.A. Director, titled, "Lee Harvey Oswald's access to classified information about the U-2" spy plane.*

(3.) *An F.B.I. report of an interview with Yuri Nosenko, a high ranking Soviet K.G.B. agent who defected to the U.S., 10 weeks after the Kennedy assassination.*

(4.) *A memorandum from C.I.A. to J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel of the Warren Commission, concerning "Soviet Use of Assassinations and Kidnapping."*

(5.) *A memorandum from C.I.A.: "Discussion between (former Soviet) Chairman Khrushchev and Columnist Drew Pearson re Lee Harvey Oswald."*

(6.) *A top secret C.I.A. memorandum to Rankin titled: "Report of conversation be-*

tween Cuban President and Cuban Ambassador" about the Kennedy assassination.

(7.) *A series of State Department cables pertaining to information obtained by U.S. Embassy in Moscow on Oswald after his defection to Russia in 1959.*

(8.) *An F.B.I. memorandum titled: "Lee Harvey Oswald re: Charles Small, Charles Smolikoff (Mexican Trip).*

(9.) *An F.B.I. memorandum: "Investigation concerning telephone numbers found on the 47th page of Oswald's address book."*

(10.) *A Report by C.I.A. on "Soviet Brainwashing Techniques."*

According to government officials who have read them, the publication of these and other still secret Warren Commission documents will add new questions about Oswald's activities rather than answer those already raised.

For example, the release of the F.B.I. report on its interview with Yuri Nosenko,* the K.G.B. defector, could rekindle the controversy over Oswald's shooting ability. Nosenko claimed that the K.G.B. information on Oswald was that he was "an extremely poor shot." The K.G.B. data on Oswald was obtained in the Fifties after he defected

*Nosenko defected to the U.S. after he arrived in Geneva, Switzerland, on January 20, 1964, as a "technical expert" attached to the Soviet disarmament delegation.

to Russia. This includes information gathered from the Hunt Club (organized by the K.G.B.) that Oswald joined while living in the Soviet Union.

No mention was made in the published Warren Commission hearings that Nosenko was ever questioned about Oswald or the Kennedy assassination. In its final report, the Warren Commission simply noted that "KGB, the agency with primary responsibility for examining defectors arriving in Russia, undoubtedly investigated Oswald as fully as possible" when he arrived in 1959.

Another secret document never mentioned in the Warren Commission Report or its hearings was the C.I.A. memorandum concerning "Soviet Use of Assassinations and Kidnapping." This highly sensitive memorandum, which the C.I.A. has so far flatly refused to make public, reported that it was secret Soviet policy to arrange for the assassination of high ranking officials who vigorously opposed their foreign policy goals. The document is one of the most carefully guarded C.I.A. papers now in existence because of the impact that it could have on U.S.-Soviet relations.

The C.I.A.'s memorandum to F.B.I. Director Hoover on "Lee Harvey Oswald's access to classified information about the U-2" is equally fascinating. Currently classified as top secret, it provides an assessment of how much Oswald, while he was a Marine, might have learned about the spy plane and possibly passed on to Russia. Oswald was stationed as a

radar operator at the Naval Base at Atsugi where the C.I.A.'s U-2s were based. From there, the U-2 spy planes made overflights of both Russia and Communist China. When Lee Oswald defected to Moscow, he told the American Embassy there that, in the words of the Warren Commission Report, "he might have something of special interest" and that he "had informed a Soviet official that he would give the Soviets any information concerning the Marine Corps and radar operation which he possessed."

Within ten months after Oswald's defection, the Russians succeeded for the first time in bringing down a U-2 — the C.I.A. aircraft piloted by Francis Gary Powers.

According to other unreleased secret testimony given the Warren Commission, Oswald contacted a young female member of the Communist Party in Japan while there with the Marines in 1957. Whether the "Japanese girl" with whom Oswald secretly met in Dallas and Mexico City is the same one he contacted in Japan is still one of the mysteries that the F.B.I. is checking.

Other mysteries include the telephone numbers in a notebook found in Oswald's room after he was captured. One of these was the unlisted "night time" number of a large news-feature syndicate in New York. Its discovery is one of the reasons why the F.B.I. has kept an "Open File" on the Kennedy assassination. As you can see, there are apparently a number of other reasons as well. ■ ■